

should or would allow this kind of activity to be happening at our Southern border, endangering American citizens and endangering immigrants in the name of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to refrain from engaging in personalities toward the President.

AND STILL I RISE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, and still I rise, a very proud and liberated Democrat, unbought and unbosser.

I rise today with a question, Madam Speaker.

The question is: Should the taxpayers of this country, the good people of the United States of America, should their tax dollars be utilized to pay for the upkeep, the maintenance, and the utilities on a building that is named in honor of a bigot and a racist?

Should our tax dollars be used for such a purpose?

Madam Speaker, let me share something with you. This is the Senate Russell Office Building.

This is how the Russell Senate Office Building looks. It has a certain degree of majesty associated with it. This is where Senators do their work. The press is found in this building, in an area just off of a rotunda. This is the Russell Senate Office Building. This is what it looks like to the naked eye. This is what people see when they drive by. Unfortunately, there is much to be seen that the eye cannot reveal to the brain.

The building named after this man, Senator Richard Russell, is a symbol of national shame. And I think that because it is a symbol of national shame—and I shall say more to you about it, Madam Speaker, as I do what I am about to do, which is to label it for what it is: a symbol of national shame—we ought not pretend that this building is a place that ought to honor a person with such a name.

It is a symbol of national shame paid for with tax dollars. These lights and the utilities are paid for with tax dollars.

Who was Senator Richard Russell?

This is the Senator, Madam Speaker, who, in 1935, participated in the very first filibuster of a civil rights bill—Richard Russell—when he and his colleagues stopped an anti-lynching bill with 6 days of nonstop talking.

Senator Richard Russell, in so doing, allowed the lynching to continue without legislation that was antithetical to it. In this country, up until 1968, some 3,446 persons—more than 3,000 Black people—were lynched in the United States of America.

There are people who don't want to hear this. There are people who would say: Wait. At some point we will get around to doing the right thing. We will bend the arc of the moral universe toward justice, and we will change the name of this building.

There are some people who would say: Wait, Al, don't bring this up now.

Madam Speaker, I refuse to allow those who are not suffering to determine the timeline for the suffering to end for those who do suffer. I am one of those who happens to be suffering, and it is painful for me to see this symbol of national shame in the United States of America, the country I love.

I believe that it is time now for us to make that change. We have had some 40-plus years—about 49 years—to change this, and we haven't done it. It is time to change it. I am not going to wait for someone else to say that it is okay to come to the floor and say that you can make this change.

I am a liberated, unbought, unbosser Democrat. It is time for this to change. It has got to change.

How soon should we change this?

Immediately, if not sooner. If it doesn't change today and doesn't change tomorrow, I will still stand my ground. It has to change, and I will await that change. It must change.

A little bit more about Senator Russell. It was in 1972, shortly after his demise, that the Senate voted overwhelmingly, 99-1, that the old Senate Office Building be named the Russell Senate Office Building. Madam Speaker, the vote was 99-1. They knew when they did it that he was a bigot and a racist.

Madam Speaker, when I say it ought to happen immediately, I assure you there are some names that I could give this evening of people who have similar histories who are still alive, and if we named a building after one of these people, then this Congress would assemble and would change that name immediately.

□ 1430

I know what we can do when we want to do something, so there is no question about whether there is a way to get this done. The question is: Do we have the will to do it? Do we have the will to take a racist and a bigot's name off of a building that is housing the Senate, Members of it?

I decline to go into the building. I will never say that I will never go in, simply because there are times when, of necessity, I may have to. But when I do, I do it with a degree of shame. I am not proud when I have to go into that building.

The last time I was there it was to show some other person the rotunda where his statue happens to be. He occupies a space all to himself. It is not like going through other areas where you see multiple personalities represented. He has a space all to himself, a bigot and a racist; and we, who have the power to make the change, tolerate it.

A bit more about Senator Russell. Here is a statement from the Senator; perhaps not a direct, exact quote, but here is a statement from the Senator: "As one who was born and reared in the atmosphere of the Old South, with six generations of my forebears now resting beneath southern soil, I am willing to go as far and make as great a sacrifice to preserve and insure white supremacy"—some things bear repeating. He said: "To preserve and insure white supremacy in the social, economic, and political life of our State as any man who lives within her borders."

He is taking a pledge to maintain white supremacy, Senator Richard Russell; a Senate office building in his honor, in his name.

Let's just continue with a bit more about Senator Richard Russell. Senator Richard Russell blocked the passage of a 1942 bill to eliminate poll taxes.

Senator Richard Russell co-authored the "Southern Manifesto" in 1956 with Senator Strom Thurmond, in opposition to the integration of public schools. Fought integration. It was segregation. He was a segregationist.

It was segregation that caused me to get on a bus that was in disrepair, that would break down, to ride within blocks of other schools predominated with persons who are Anglo, or were Anglo at the time, ride past those schools for some 20 to 30 minutes to get to another school in another city. That is what segregation did.

It was segregation that caused me to get books that were hand-me-downs when the other schools where Anglos were had the books. When they were finished with the books, when they got new books, then I could get a better book that was not the latest edition of the book I needed.

It was segregation that caused me to have to go to colored water fountains.

It was segregation that put me in the back of the bus.

It was segregation that forced me to the balcony of the movie.

It was segregation that locked us up in the bottom of the jails.

I know segregation. I know what it looks like. I have seen its ugly face. The Klan burned a cross in my yard.

I know what it smells like. I have had to drink from those filthy water fountains.

I know what it sounds like. I have had people call me ugly names.

So I just hope my friends will not get too discombobulated when they hear that AL GREEN came to the floor and said what he is saying now. Don't expect me to tolerate this. You can get some others to do it, but you won't get me to do it.

I will not tolerate this. I demand that this change take place. I am not asking.

Why would I engage in the protocols of polite society when this level of bigotry exists in my face?

Let's talk a little bit more about Senator Richard Russell. He led the 60-

day filibuster against the Civil Rights Act of 1964; led the southern boycott of the Democratic National Convention in 1964, after LBJ—one of the greatest Presidents ever, in my opinion—signed the Civil Rights Act.

He called the Civil Rights Act short-sighted and dangerous. Those civil rights acts, the act of 1965, when President Johnson signed it, he signed it in ink, but it was written with the blood of those who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the Honorable John Lewis having been one of them.

I remember talking to him. He said he thought he was going to die.

Signed in ink but written in blood.

John Lewis was a great and noble American.

That Civil Rights Act is probably the reason that I am here. I probably wouldn't be in Congress if not but for what happened on the Edmund Pettus Bridge; people who had the desire to see liberty and justice for all, but who also had the ability to take the blows to their bodies without resorting to retaliation.

If they had retaliated on the Edmund Pettus Bridge, it would have been just another melee. It would have been just another skirmish. But they didn't. And because they suffered, I am able to stand here and make these comments.

So you can well understand, I hope and I pray, that—because I know how I got here—I am not going to tolerate this. I know how I got here.

I didn't get here because I am so smart. I got here because somebody found out what a 90-pound German Shepherd bites like.

I am here because somebody understands what it is like to go to jail for a cause.

I am here because somebody understands what it is like to lose a loved one—Myrlie Evers—for a cause.

So let's not play games. I am not here to satisfy and satiate those who would say wait, give us a chance to do this on our own terms.

You have had 49 years; 49 years too many, in my opinion. So I am not going to wait. And I will be back again to talk more about this after I finish what I am about to say now.

Senator Richard Russell twice, 1949 and 1964, introduced legislation—this is a painful thing to read. This is a painful thing to have to utter—twice introduced legislation to move African Americans out of Southern States. That is Senator Richard Russell.

So dear friends, I beg your pardon if anyone takes offense at what I have said. But I must tell you, I would say it again, and probably will, given the opportunity because, at some point in life, you just have to take a stand.

The people who sent me here, they didn't send me here to go along as a result of toleration of things like this. They didn't send me here to go along so that I could move along. They sent me here to take a stand. And there are times in life when it is better to stand alone than not stand at all.

I am a liberated Democrat. I stand alone, but I stand on truth. I stand on the words of Carlyle, "No lie can live forever."

This is the ultimate manifestation of insidious prevarication to imply that this should be honored with the name of Russell.

Now, there are those who are going to say, well, AL GREEN, what would you name the building? A tactic quite often used, because when I say, well, let's name it—you complete the sentence—they will say, well, I think it ought to be named—you complete the sentence.

But that is not what I am saying, dear brothers and sisters—and I say brothers and sisters, because, in my heart, I believe there is just one race, as Dr. King put it, the human race. And I believe that all persons are created equal, from a bass black to a treble white on God's keyboard, as he put it.

So, my dear brothers and sisters, that is not what I am saying. I am saying, take this name off, Russell. I am saying, let it revert back to the name it had before Russell was placed on it. That name was the Old Senate Office Building. I am saying, let it revert back to the Old Senate Office Building, and you decide the name. The name I will leave to you until and unless there is a need to prevent this from happening again, something similar.

But there are many people worthy of having this building bear their names. This man is not worthy. This man does not deserve this honor.

So let it revert back to the Old Senate Office Building, and then do what we do; get a committee; get a commission; find a way to name it appropriately. And then I believe that those that I speak for, who do not live in the suites of life, who live in the streets of life, those that I speak for, who are among the least, the last, and the lost, those that I speak for, who are not among the well-off, the well-heeled, and the well-to-do, those that I speak for, many of whom have gone to glory, but I believe that they will find reason to know that change, long though it may be in coming, that change can take place, and that this country will be a better place for it. The country I love, by the way.

I am not the guy that you are going to tag with this mantra, this label, this caption, this style: He doesn't love his country. I love my country.

I am not the guy that you are going to tag with, he is a flag burner. I wear the flag.

You can't tag me with being a guy who refuses to stand for the national anthem. I stand and I sing the national anthem.

You can't tag me with being the guy who refuses to say the Pledge of Allegiance. I say the Pledge of Allegiance.

But now, tag me, label me as the guy who loves his country and who refuses to accept this level of bigotry, who refuses to accept allowing the tax dollars from people who are eking out a place in the world, for their tax dollars to be

used for this. I am that guy. I am the guy who is going to stand up for this—against this, if you will.

□ 1445

Finally, this: I never came to Congress to say what I am saying. I came to Congress to help people who were in need of housing. That was what I thought I would do. I came to Congress to help people get a decent day's pay for a hard day's work.

This is not something that I planned, but it is something that I cannot stand, and I have to stand against it. There is just something that won't allow me to tolerate this.

I know that this will engender some additional detractors. I get the calls; I know. But there just comes a time in your life when you have to decide that there are some things worth making a sacrifice for. I choose to do what I do because I know how I got here.

Madam Speaker, I am grateful, and I yield back the balance of my time.

DEAL WITH CRISIS AT SOUTHERN BORDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2021, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) for 30 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, it is an honor to follow my fellow former judge from Texas. We both know Jesus, and one of Jesus' comments was that if we were just lukewarm, we would be spit out of the mouth. I know my friend's heart, and he is passionate about things that he sees as unjust, so I know he is in no danger of ever being spit out because he does have that passion and cares so deeply.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOHMERT. I yield to the gentleman from Texas, my friend.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend for his kind words. He and I spoke earlier today, and I believe that there are people who assume things about us that are just not true.

There are probably people who assume that he and I don't get along, but they don't understand that there are things that can bring people together that supersede the physicalities that we place all of our emphasis on.

I would have the world know that he and I talk and that we don't have hard conversations about the things that are important to both of us. I appreciate his kind words.

Mr. GOHMERT. Madam Speaker, I know that we are brothers, and we are going to be together for a long time. I am not talking about here in this Chamber. Anyway, I appreciate my friend very much.

I didn't know anything about Senator Russell, but I have gotten an education. I thank him.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank my dear brother. God bless him.